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FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS
OF THE
AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY, AND SEAFOOD AWARENESS
STUDY COMMISSION

MARCH 1985

REPORT TO THE
1985 GENERAL ASSEMBLY
OF NORTH CAROLINA

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INTRODUCTION

Historically, the agriculture, forestry, and seafood industries have played an essential and vital role in supporting both the rural and urban populations of North Carolina. In recent years, all of these industries have experienced severe financial setbacks and instability due to inclement weather, inflation, and other unavoidable circumstances. In order to insure that the agriculture, forestry, and seafood industries maintain their ability to produce for future needs, the 1983 General Assembly enacted HB 1169 (Chapter 915, 1983 Session Laws) creating the Agriculture, Forestry, and Seafood Awareness Study Commission. The major purpose of the Commission is to focus public attention on the importance of these three industries to North Carolina's economy.

Commission's Charge

The charge to the Commission by the General Assembly contains the following directions for studying the agriculture, forestry, and seafood industries:

1. Study the influence of these industries on the economy of the State.
2. Develop alternatives for increasing the public awareness of these industries.
3. Study the present status of the three industries.
4. Identify the problems limiting the future growth of these industries.

5. Develop an awareness of the importance of science and technological development to the future of these industries.
6. Formulate plans for new State initiatives and support for the three industries.

These directions formed the foundation of the Agriculture, Forestry and Seafood Awareness Study Commission's review of these industries.

Commission Membership

The membership of the Commission includes citizens of North Carolina who are interested in the vitality of the agriculture, forestry, and seafood sectors of the State's economy. Nine members of the Commission are appointed by the Governor, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and the Lieutenant Governor, with each official appointing three. The following individuals also serve on the Commission:

1. Chairman of the House Agriculture Committee
2. Chairman of the Senate Agriculture Committee
3. Commissioner of Agriculture or his designee
4. Member of the Board of Agriculture
5. President of the N.C. Farm Bureau or his designee
6. Master of the N.C. Grange or his designee
7. President of the N.C. Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts
8. President of the N.C. Fisheries Association
9. President of the N.C. Forestry Association
10. President of the N.C. Agribusiness Council

The Co-chairmen of the Commission are the Chairman of the Senate Agriculture Committee and Chairman of the House Agriculture Committee.

Proceedings

The nineteen member Agriculture, Forestry and Seafood Awareness Study Commission held its first meeting on November 30, 1983 and was organized under the leadership of Representative Vernon G. James of Pasquotank County and Senator Vernon E. White of Pitt County. The Commission agreed to conduct public hearings in various localities across the State to pinpoint problems and develop an awareness of the importance of the agriculture, forestry and seafood industries to the economy of North Carolina. The Commission also agreed to formulate plans for new State initiatives and support for agriculture, forestry and seafood.

In its charge to promote agriculture and the forestry and seafood industries, the Commission agreed to have its second meeting video taped for broadcasting on the Open Public Events Network (Open-Net) television series. Representative James, Senator White and Jim Summers, Secretary of the Department of Natural Resources and Community Development, responded to questions during a call-in period following the showing of the video tape of the meeting.

During this meeting Commissioner Jim Graham told the Commission how vitally important agriculture is to the economy of North Carolina. He identified the greatest problems facing the North Carolina farmer today as over-production and his inability to sell what is produced. He suggested that the farmer needs assistance emphasizing domestic and foreign export marketing.

Dean Ed Legetes of the School of Agriculture and Life Sciences at North Carolina State University briefed the Commission on the School's mission and organization. In response to questions regarding how the University is aiding the small farmers, Dean Legates stated that the University advises the small farmers on good management and marketing practices.

Mr. John Sledge, President of the N.C. Farm Bureau told the Commission that Agriculture's future depends on everyone's awareness.

Mr. James Oliver, Master of the North Carolina Grange, gave a brief history of the Grange then spoke on the role of the Grange to Agriculture. He stated that the purpose of the Grange is to educate and promote the welfare of the American farmer. He stressed the need for the farmer to have adequate financing, marketing, transportation and good soil and water conservation practices.

Director Boe Green of the Division of Forest Resources, Dean Eric Ellwood of the School of Forest Resources at NCSU and Mr. George Pace, a representative of the forestry industry spoke to the Commission and gave perspectives on the State's University's and the private sector's interests, respectively, in this important industry.

Director Bob Mahood of the Division of Marine Fisheries briefed the Commission on the past, present and future of the seafood industry in North Carolina. One of the major problems

in the seafood industry is that much of the seafood harvested off the North Carolina coast must be taken to other states for processing. Mr. Mahood also indicated that another serious concern of the fishermen in North Carolina is the fresh water runoff which devastates aquatic nursery areas.

The Commission toured northeastern North Carolina and examined aquatic nursery areas locations. Director Bob Mahood demonstrated the types of seafood found in the nurseries and answered many questions from Commission members. The Commission then toured the Tidewater Agricultural Research Station in Washington County to observe its beef cattle operation. Representatives of Weyerhaeuser a forest products company, provided a tour of their manufacturing operation in Martin County.

Dean Ellwood presented a recommendation to the Commission stating that members of the forestry community had recommended the formation of a standing Forestry Commission with responsibility for developing and implementing a continual long-term planning program for Forestry.

The Agriculture, Forestry, and Seafood Awareness Study Commission subsequently endorsed the concept of a Forestry Commission.

The Commission began a tour of western North Carolina in August 84 by visiting an apply orchard in Lawndale owned by the Lutz family. Commission members observed research being conducted at the Lutz family apply orchard by research personnel from North Carolina State University.

From Lawndale, Commission members were flown to North Wilkesboro for a tour of the Holly Farms Poultry Processing plant. Nearly 400,000 chickens per day are processed through the North Wilkesboro Holly Farms plant.

Subsequent stops included:

1. A tour of Kincaid Furniture Company in Lenoir to observe the use of forest products in the making of furniture;
2. A tour of the Morganton Forestry Center of the Division of Forest Resources, N.C. Department of Natural Resources and Community Development located in Morganton;
3. A tour of the Asheville Farmers Market, Wingerden Greenhouses, and the Mountain Horticultural Research Station, all located in or near the City of Asheville.

The highlight of the Commission's western tour was the business meeting conducted at the Asheville Farmers Market and a very thorough tour of the livestock facility located in Asheville. At the business meeting, members were briefed by Mr. Dick Jennings, owner of the Jennings' Trout Farm, on trout farming in western North Carolina and by Mr. Thompson, Regional State Forester for the N.C. Division of Forest Resources. Mr. Thompson briefed the Commission on forestry issues related to pest control, water quality, reforestation, nursery areas, and marketing.

As a result of the Commission's field visits and tours to facilities located throughout North Carolina and of having numerous representatives of all three industries present information concerning the status of each industry, the Commission has identified numerous findings relating to all three industries. Findings have been studied and reviewed by the Commission and specific efforts that can or should be taken by the 1985 General Assembly have been stated.

Consequently, the pages that follow provide a brief introduction on the significance of each industry to the State's economy, a delineation of the Commission's findings, and subsequently, the Commission's recommendations to the 1985 General Assembly.

AGRICULTURE

As one of North Carolina's oldest industries, agriculture makes an important and incalculable contribution to the State's economy. With nearly 79,000 individual farms scattered across the State and nearly 6 million acres of cropland in production during a typical year, North Carolina is blessed with a diversity of farms and crops produced. Still, the sheer volume of farms and acres of cropland in production can easily lead one to underestimate the full impact of agriculture to the State's economy. While one-third of our farms generate annual sales greater than \$10,000, nearly two-thirds generate sales less than \$10,000 per year. But, when agriculture and agriculture-related industries are combined, they become the number one contributor to the North Carolina economy.

Agriculture and the agribusiness industry, though, are experiencing serious financial problems. Many family farmers continue to leave the industry due to bankruptcy and corporate takeovers, and young individuals have shown a tendency to favor other professions. While many sound reasons can be offered for the current economic state of the industry, these factors, farmers leaving the industry, farms being lost, and young individuals opting for other professions have had adverse impacts and signal that the industry is in a state of flux.

To address some of the industries' problems and assist it in maintaining its viable economic standing as part of the North Carolina economy, the Agriculture, Forestry, and Seafood Awareness Study Commission makes the following findings and recommendations to the 1985 General Assembly:

FINDINGS--Agriculture

1. A changing and rapidly diversifying agricultural economy has created new challenges and opportunities to expand existing markets or develop new markets for North Carolina agricultural products.
2. More agricultural processing and canning facilities are needed to process the agricultural products produced by North Carolina.
3. Regional animal diagnostic laboratories have proven to be a major factor in the growth of livestock and poultry products and the high value of cash receipts generated by these products. However, not all parts of the State are adequately and uniformly served by animal diagnostic laboratories.

4. The Regional Agronomist program of the Agronomic Division of NCDA is making substantial contributions to farmers in the Coastal Plain in helping them implement Soil Testing, Plant Analysis and Nematode Advisory recommendations and thus lowering production cost and increasing farm profitability.
5. There is a demand for more and better analyses of foods, feeds, fertilizer and pesticides in order to provide improved service to farmers and the public. There is a need for more efficient and automated equipment to increase capacity and improve accuracy of sample analyses.
6. Whenever grain is traded, the buyers and sellers depend on the integrity of measuring devices (scales and moisture meters) to determine the value of the transaction. While scales are routinely tested for accuracy, moisture meters, which are not subject to inspection, represent an untested link in grain transactions.
7. The every changing status of agricultural technology requires constant support for public agricultural field research to assist farmers in improving net farm income and providing quality products for consumers.
8. The orderly implementation of multidisciplinary pest control programs including both the use of biological

control and pesticides is in the best interest of the environmental agricultural production because the impact of pesticides on the environment is a growing interest and the use of chemical pesticides is one of the most costly factors in agricultural production. Biological control is an acceptable way to deal with these problems.

9. The judicious use of fertilizer and liming materials is essential for profitable crop production in North Carolina. Current inspections and testing programs are limited to registration and grade guarantees. No routine evaluations for contamination of fertilizer with pesticides are being made even though serious damage and losses have resulted from continuation.
10. North Carolina's comparative advantage in agricultural production and marketing vis a vis other regions and countries is highly dependent upon a strong research base and the timely delivery of research based technology to the producer and marketing firm. Also volatile economic conditions in recent years have placed serious financial strain on many farm families, businesses and rural communities. North Carolina's farmers, commodity organizations, farm organizations and the agribusiness community have identified improved business management,

financial management and marketing skills as the producers most critical need in the years ahead. Improved economic decision-making is essential to the future financial stability of these groups.

11. The release of pesticides into soil, air and water creates potential health and environmental problems that subsequently demand increased attention and resources.
12. Greater awareness and knowledge of agriculture and the agribusiness industry by the citizens of North Carolina is needed if agriculture is to be appreciated for the significant contributions to our health and State economy.
13. Numerous factors have contributed to the dilemma faced by the agricultural industry. Many of these factors are influenced by policies established by the U.S. Government. Few, if any, negative forces contributing to Agriculture's dilemma are the exclusive result of State policies.
14. The loss of farms and farm land appears to be a serious, complex phenomenon resulting from many competing social, cultural, and economic forces.
15. The tobacco industry in North Carolina, which accounts for 36 percent of the state's cash crop income is in trouble and the future is bleak primarily because of the significant reduction of

cigarette smoking due to the fears associated with tobacco use and serious human health problems. Although the use of tobacco is declining in the United States, there is no question that a significant number of our citizens will continue to smoke and that in other countries, and especially in the third world, the use of tobacco products continues to increase. Accordingly, the East Carolina University School of Medicine, in an effort to support our local agriculture industry and to address one of our major national health problems, embarked on a program of tobacco research with the intent of producing a better and safer product.

RECOMMENDATIONS--Agriculture

1. The Commission strongly supports the Department of Agriculture's expansion and capital requests for the 1985-87 biennium. The Department is requesting \$18,241,062 for the 1985-87 biennium in expansion and capital improvements which will fill many of the needs discussed in the findings. In summary, the Department of Agriculture's major requests for the biennium include the following items:
 - (a) \$776,441 to expand the Marketing Division's market development efforts by developing new markets, expanding existing markets, designing product promotional programs, and developing farmer's markets.

- (b) \$3,706,477 to complete the State network of regional animal diagnostic laboratories both in terms of facilities and services provided.
- (c) \$3,426,206 for the Research Station Division's capital improvements and expansion needs that will enhance opportunities for increasing net farm income and insuring consumers of quality products.
- (d) \$294,664 to implement a grain moisture meter inspection program.
- (e) \$7,354,817 to expand the pesticide regulatory program to include environmental monitoring, surveillance of pesticide storage and disposal, and improved response to emergencies. These funds will expand services and provide for a new laboratory.

All of these efforts have the potential of significantly improving the income of North Carolina farmers and the quality of agricultural products for North Carolina consumers.

In addition, the Commission recommends that the 1985 General Assembly appropriate an additional \$2 million to the Department of Agriculture for the purpose of exploring and developing new markets for agriculture, forestry, and marine products grown in North Carolina.

2. The Commission recommends the 1985-87 N.C. Agricultural Research Service and N.C. Agricultural Extension Service budget requests for the conduct of agricultural research and the timely transfer of new technology to the producer which can enhance profitability and competitiveness in regional and world markets. The Commission also supports the N.C. Agricultural Extension Service and the N.C. Agricultural Research Service 1985-87 expansion budget request on Management and Marketing of Agricultural Products to provide extension agents with special skills in management and marketing to improve the decision-making abilities of farm families, small agribusiness firms and rural communities. All of these requests require \$7,139,997 during the 1985-87 biennium.

In addition, the Commission recommends that the 1985 General Assembly appropriate an additional \$1 million to North Carolina State University to develop new agricultural and forest products economically feasible for growth in North Carolina.

3. While the Advisory Budget Commission has included funding for a major market development effort in its recommendations to the Governor and General Assembly, the Commission recommends expanded support for marketing efforts and strongly encourages the

Department of Agriculture to market North Carolina agricultural products in both domestic and international markets.

4. Since agricultural awareness by the general public has waned during the past several decades, the Commission recommends that the 1985 General Assembly direct the State Board of Education and the N.C. Department of Agriculture to develop and implement an agriculture awareness program for the school age population. Such a program, once implemented, should include making this population group aware of agriculture's economic contribution to the State's economy.
5. In order to further insure that the general public continues to be aware of the importance and significance of agriculture to North Carolina, the Commission recommends that 1985 be designated as the Year of Agriculture, Forestry, and Seafood in North Carolina.
6. The Commission recommends that the Departments of Agriculture and Commerce work together to recruit agricultural processing and canning facilities to this state.
7. To encourage agricultural processing facilities to come to North Carolina, the commission recommends that investment tax credits be made available to such facilities.

8. The Commission supports a \$1.8 million request, over five years, to the ECU School of Medicine for tobacco research with the intent of producing a better and safer product.

FORESTRY

Forestry is extremely important to the future of this state, both economically and environmentally. North Carolina has almost 20 million acres of forests, two-thirds of its total land area, which are owned by 245,000 private landowners. Without question, North Carolina is among the nation's top five forestry states. Forestry ranks as the second largest industry, employing one of every fourteen workers and contributing over eight billion dollars annually to the State's economy. Thirty to forty years from now, the desirable trees currently being planted or regenerated naturally will be worth three hundred million dollars per year to landowners and the State. If our forest land were adequately managed, this production could be doubled and would put North Carolina in a good position to support its forest industries, as well as to export its forest products. Equally important are the inherent values forests offer to the quality of life in our State: soil protection and development, good water quality, aesthetics, wildlife habitat, outdoor recreation, and clean air.

The Commission, in recognizing these important contributions and the need to maintain them for the State's economy and environment, supports the concepts and plans

embodied in "Pathways For Forestry in North Carolina" by making the following findings and recommendations.

FINDINGS--Forestry

1. Market Development is likely to have a significant impact on forestry, production, development and preservation of forest resources. Information provided to the Commission indicates that marketing is an important element that needs to be strengthened in all three industries.
2. Approximately 70% (15 million acres) of the total forest area in North Carolina is owned by non-industrial private landowners. Only 50% (7.5 million acres) of this acreage owned by private landowners is currently being managed to insure reforestation after harvesting has occurred. The remaining 50% is not being managed. In addition, many non-industrial private landowners do not make investments in forest management because they are unaware of the long term benefits of sound forest management practices or are unwilling to make such long term investments.
3. Forest fires, natural disasters, insects, and diseases all pose threats to our State's forest resources and the preservation of those resources.
4. The State Foresters indicated that the principal problem in N.C. is the relative lack of management and reforestation by private owners who now own 70%

of the state's commercial forestland. The Dean of the School of Forest Resources pointed out the need for strong research and development programs to lower the costs of reforestation and to develop better markets for forest products. The industry representative referred to the Association's joint planning effort to bring about needed advance.

RECOMMENDATIONS--Forestry

1. To strengthen the marketing capability of the Division of Forest Resources and to pursue new markets for the sale of forest products, the Commission recommends expansion of the Market Development Program during the 85-87 biennium. This program has already begun efforts to find markets for some of North Carolina's low quality timber products, such as industrial use of wood as fuel and the Weyehauser Elkin, N. C. plant that uses wood chips to constitute a board that is competitive with plywood.
2. The Commission endorses strengthening of the current Forestry Advisory Council and recommends careful and thoughtful consideration of ways the council can have a more meaningful role. The Commission recognizes that development, use, and preservation of the State's forest resources require continuous development and refinement of long range plans and policies and is in agreement that strengthening of the Forestry Advisory Council will aid in these efforts.

3. Since enactment of the Forest Development Program, forest based industries have willingly supported the program through assessments. Since enactment of the program, the General Assembly has appropriated \$500,000 per year while assessments now approximate \$1.2 million per year. These funds are used for reforestation efforts. The Commission recommends that a careful review of the Forest Development Act be undertaken by the General Assembly during the 1985 Session to determine if changes are needed in the ratio of assessments to State appropriations.
4. The Commission recommends that increased research and extension efforts undertaken by N.C. State University are needed on a statewide level to reduce reforestation and manufacturing costs, and to encourage forest management and forest based industries in North Carolina.

SEAFOOD

North Carolina is blessed with an abundance of marine resources that support a diverse and growing seafood industry. The scope of our seafood industry encompasses both commercial and recreational fishing activities. Commercial and recreational fisheries provide economic benefits statewide through the harvesting, processing and sale of seafood products and associated services such as restaurants, motels, marinas, markets, and fishing tackle distributors.

Problems exist in the seafood industry in the form of user group conflicts, which impact the individuals harvesting the marine resources and habitat and water quality, which impact the seafood resources directly. To continue recent efforts made by the General Assembly in support of the State's marine resources, the Commission makes the following findings and recommendations.

FINDINGS--Seafood

- (1) Maintenance of high quality estuarine habitat and good coastal water quality is essential to maintaining North Carolina's seafood industry.
- (2) Due to the location and nature of North Carolina's major coastal water bodies, they are especially sensitive to degraded water quality from inland sources and immediate coastal areas. Often activities produce no immediate effects but manifest themselves in cumulative impacts in the estuaries.
- (3) Activities throughout the river basins, inland as well as on the coast, affect coastal water quality through changes in runoff characteristics, and reduce filtration.
- (4) Freshwater intrusion into estuarine primary nursery areas through land development and drainage affect fishery resource productivity by altering the necessary salinity regimes needed by juvenile estuarine organisms.

- (5) Nutrient enrichment in coastal waters from point sources and non-point sources throughout the river basins affect fishery productivity by causing nuisance algae blooms, altering food chains, and promoting bacterial growth and other disease organisms.
- (6) The majority of seafood caught and landed in North Carolina is sold to seafood dealers, who in turn, wash, grade and pack the products for shipment to traditional out-of-state markets for sale or processing. This method of handling seafood has limited the market demand and consequently limited the potential total value to the industry. The Division of Marine Fisheries, through its newly created Seafood Development Program, is assisting the North Carolina seafood industry in developing capabilities to process fish and shellfish landed in North Carolina into table-ready products, which at the same time helps develop new markets for North Carolina seafood products. Processing the seafood into table-ready products will generate approximately four times the State's investment compared to simply packing and shipping the seafood to another state to be processed. Developing new markets will create more demand for North Carolina seafood products and ultimately bring more dollars to North Carolina's seafood industry.

- (7) Oregon Inlet is the only access to ocean fishing grounds for a distance of over 125 miles along the coast of North Carolina and Virginia. Safe and reliable navigation access through Oregon Inlet is essential to the prosperity of the fishing industry in a wide area of northeastern North Carolina. Even the most intensive dredging effort cannot maintain a safe navigation channel through Oregon Inlet, as demonstrated by the loss of fishing boats and the periodic closure of the inlet to navigation during the last few years. The authorized plan to stabilize Oregon Inlet by jetties and to by-pass sand around the inlet to mitigate beach erosion has been developed and verified by numerous engineering and scientific studies and is the desired solution to the navigation hazards at Oregon Inlet.

RECOMMENDATIONS--Seafood

- (1) The Commission strongly supports the Broad Creek Project and other coastal water management programs. The Commission also believes that special water quality consideration should be given to estuarine nursery areas which are the basis for the seafood industry.
- (2) The Commission recommends that further incentives be made available to allow wide-spread use of best management practices for agriculture and forestry

throughout all of the river basins. Special attention should be given to those practices aimed at water management and runoff control, and sedimentation and nutrient control.

- (3) The Commission supports nutrient sensitive designation for coastal drainage basins vulnerable to nutrient enrichment such as the Neuse Basin, Pamlico Basin, and Albemarle Basin.
- (4) The Commission recommends that conservation practices and education programs be strengthened basin-wide for non-point sources of pollution, since most of the pollution responsible for degraded coastal water quality are from non-point sources.
- (5) The Commission recommends development of an integrated physical, chemical, and biological monitoring program to determine the cumulative impacts of activities in the river basins as well as coastal land development on fishery resources.
- (6) The Commission supports the efforts of the Division of Marine Fisheries in (1) developing the processing capabilities of North Carolina's seafood industry and (2) promoting the sale of North Carolina seafood products in state, national and foreign markets. Consequently the Commission supports the Division's expansion budget request for more personnel and

operating funds for the Seafood Development Program in the 1985 legislative session and by encouraging cooperative marketing efforts between the agriculture and seafood industries.

- (7) The Commission hereby resolves to support efforts in Congress to authorize the use of land by the Corps of Engineers to construct jetties at Oregon Inlet and the timely funding and construction of the project by the Corps. The Commission also urges the Governor of North Carolina and other appropriate State and Federal officials to continue support for construction of the Oregon Inlet Project and further development of the Wanchese Harbor Seafood Industrial Park.

General Findings and Recommendations Applicable to all

Industries

North Carolina's agriculture, forestry and seafood industries have many similar problems. Such things as high cost of production, foreign imports, lack of strong marketing programs and highly variable prices, commonly plague these industries. In addition, management practices associated with one of these industries can often adversely impact the others. For example agriculture and forestry practices can directly impact the estuarine environment through runoff of fresh water carrying fertilizers, herbicides and pesticides, which, in turn, adversely effects the fishery resources on which the seafood industry depends. During the past year a better understanding of these cause and effect problems has occurred

between the agriculture, forestry and seafood industries. A strong concerted effort has been made by all three industries to cooperate and combine resources to solve North Carolina's water quality problems. Funds have been provided by the Legislature to determine how we can best manage North Carolina's water resources to the benefit of the farmer, forester and fisherman. The Agriculture, Forestry and Seafood Awareness Study Commission has been instrumental in developing a working relationship among these industries. Consequently, during its studies, the Commission has identified several findings and recommendations applicable to all three industries and that require attention during the 1985 session of the General Assembly.

General Findings Applicable to all Industries

- (1) All three industries, Agriculture, Forestry and Seafood have problems with marketing their products because the necessary infrastructure for extensive marketing is not always available.
- (2) Continuing efforts to increase the awareness of the importance of the agriculture, forestry, and seafood industries to the citizens of North Carolina are needed.
- (3) A multi-disciplinary approach to natural resources problems involving agriculture, marine, and forest resources is needed. No longer can environmental concerns impacting several areas be effectively addressed by one department or agency.

- (4) Railroad abandonments throughout the state are severely affecting the movement of agricultural and forests products throughout the State. For example, the proposed abandonment of the Albemarle Sound Railroad Bridge poses a serious threat to the economy of eastern North Carolina. In addition, other railroad abandonments are likely to have similar economic impact throughout North Carolina.

General Recommendations Applicable to all Industries

- (1) The Commission recommends continued legislative support and funding for market development programs designed to expand or improve markets for agricultural, forestry, or seafood products.
- (2) The Commission recommends that the State Board of Education, the Departments of Public Education, and Community Colleges, and the Agricultural Extension Services, work with other education related organizations and agencies to develop a comprehensive program for studying agriculture, forestry, and seafood industries in the classroom. In addition, the Commission recommends that the Departments of Agriculture and Natural Resources and Community Development, along with organizations and groups supporting these industries develop strategies to make the consumer aware of the value and importance of agricultural, forestry, and seafood products purchased.

various problems identified. However, our work is not yet done, and has only begun. We therefore recommend the establishment of an on-going, permanent standing Legislative Commission to continue the work begun and insure that all three industries are provided with necessary incentives to maintain and improve upon their current economic standings.

- (3) The Commission supports the concept of a Natural Resource Research Center for North Carolina which would provide a focus for the development of natural resource data bases and for the assessment of management alternatives affecting natural resources, especially land, water, air, and vegetation resources upon which agricultural, forestry, and marine activities depend.

Such a center could provide information and analysis for State agencies with administrative and regulatory responsibilities as well as local governmental units and industry. At a minimum, the establishment of such a center would necessitate the involvement of several universities and the aforementioned departments of State Government.

- (4) The Commission strongly recommends that the 1985 General Assembly address the issue of railroad abandonments, the economic impact on adjacent communities, agricultural, forestry, and seafood industries, and clearly delineate the role to be taken by the State of North Carolina.
- (5) Finally, the Commission has done much to become aware of the economic contribution of all three industries to the State's economy. It has done much to identify problems associated with each industry and has made specific recommendations to address the